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A
FEW REMARKS IN DEFENCE
OF
DR. BOSWORTH,
AND
HIS ANGLO-SAXON DICTIONARIES.

BY
C. B. THURSTON, B.A. F.S.A. &c.

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T. COMBE, M.A., E. PICKARD HALL, AND H. LATHAM, M.A.

PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY

A FEW REMARKS

IN DEFENCE OF DR. BOSWORTH'S

SAXON DICTIONARIES.

To many this pamphlet will appear to be unnecessary, for they will think that the literary fame of the Professor of Anglo-Saxon is sufficiently established to withstand the charges made against it, which are as unfair as they are unprovoked. In so thinking, they will think rightly. But there arises a wider question than any affecting only an individual, however eminent. Are personal attacks, with no other foundation than an imaginary discovery of errors, to be put forward as reliable criticism, and is scholarship to be degraded by the unworthy use of reckless assertion?

To such questions this pamphlet answers—No. It does not pretend to be exhaustive; but it is believed it will be found amply sufficient for its purpose. It is limited to a statement of facts, and on them I rely. I hasten at once to a plain detail of these facts, and of the cause of my entering upon the subject.

A week or two ago, some friends informed Dr. Bosworth that a pamphlet was in preparation by a Mr. Cockayne against his Anglo-Saxon Dictionaries, and suggested it would be prudent "to come to terms with him." On inquiring who was this Mr. Cockayne, and what was meant by "coming to terms," it was ascertained that Mr. Oswald Cockayne is one of the Under-Masters of King's College School, London, and the "coming to terms" meant in effect, that he should be admitted joint or chief editor,—have his name on the title, and be handsomely paid for his services, otherwise the pamphlet would be printed and sent to all the Reviews, and to men of influence in Oxford and London. If properly offered, assistance would have been accepted and remunerated; but the threat made it impossible to take any notice of the proposition, which, however, clearly indicated the animus of the whole affair.

Shortly afterwards a proof-sheet of Mr. Cockayne's pamphlet was received by post. From its personalities, its want of accuracy as to dates and assertions, with a passage expunged by his own pen, it was not thought possible that he would venture to publish it. For these reasons, and from the greatest reluctance to be employed in the hateful task of exposing the errors of any man, Dr. Bosworth was determined not to notice it. One great inducement for silence was the style and spirit of the whole pamphlet, which appeared a sufficient answer, especially in Oxford, where the high

tone of gentlemanly feeling, which pervades the whole University, cannot endure such assumptions and personalities; he therefore let the matter rest.

When I saw the pamphlet, I thought a short and temperate reply was desirable, and obtained permission from the Professor to answer it, with the use of his notes. In my reply I must necessarily enter into some dry details, and state facts which are far from pleasant, but I hope to do it free from that spirit which pervades Mr. Cockayne's pamphlet.

Dr. Bosworth began to read Anglo-Saxon MSS. at an early age, and spent much time in the Libraries of Cambridge, of Oxford, and of London. At the British Museum he transcribed from the Anglo-Saxon MSS. all the passages which his old friend, Sharon Turner, translated and incorporated into his works. Large collections were then made for his proposed Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, on which he was employed for seven years: it was four years in the press, and was published in 1838. This does not look much like copying from Grimm, Kemble, and Thorpe, as Mr. Cockayne imagines.

After his publication of 1838, he continued to collect materials for a Compendious Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. This is not an abridgement of its larger predecessor. It contains the substance of the larger book, without the etymologies, but with the addition of, at least, one fourth more words, which the compendious form of the dictionary enabled him to incorporate. I believe

he was the first to note the inflections of nouns and verbs upon a regular system. Such confidence had the publisher in his accuracy, that all the sheets were stereotyped as they were corrected, and the plates of more than half the work were finished in 1843, and the end of the alphabet was reached in 1845; but the preface, from illness and failing sight, was not written till 1848; in which year it was published, and not in 1855, as Mr. Cockayne so repeatedly asserts. What then becomes of the following calculation and his personal allusions? “Whether Dr. Bosworth “be likely to produce anything satisfactory, may “be plainly seen by the progress he has made in “Saxon learning since the publication of his large “dictionary; and this is patent to all men’s eyes (?) “in his ‘Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English “Dictionary, 1855.’ [1845]. If we have means of “measuring the quantum, or rather the quantillum “of knowledge which he got into his head (?) in “seventeen years, between 1838 and 1855 ‘*in seven years, between 1838 and 1845, in which seven years there was an addition of words exceeding by one quarter those in the larger book*], “we shall be “able to form some notion how much more has “been laid up in nine” [*nineteen*]. If the number of words increased more than one fourth in *seven years*, how much, by the same industry, must they have increased in *nineteen*? I know, from personal examination, that they have so accumulated, and the corrections are so numerous,

as to make the larger Dictionary almost a new work.

There can be no doubt as to the accuracy of the preceding dates, for those which relate to the Compendious Dictionary are taken from the proof sheets, on which the day and year of their correction are clearly written. It is, however, not improbable that there may have been publishers' reprints, from the stereotype plates bearing a later date than 1848; but this might, and ought to have been ascertained before founding serious charges upon a supposed date. At all events, it is clear that Mr. Cockayne was so little acquainted with Anglo-Saxon literature and bibliography in the year 1855, as not to know that this Compendious Dictionary was published in 1848. This fact proves two things:—In the first place, that he was hasty to fix a date, without examination, and then to build unfounded charges upon this wrong date; and, in the second, that his Anglo-Saxon studies have not been close, nor minute, nor of long duration, not having commenced before 1855, and perhaps some years later. His time, therefore, limited as it is by his scholastic duties, would leave very little opportunity for a careful reading of the numerous MSS. in the British Museum, exclusive of those in Oxford and Cambridge.

For simplicity of arrangement, facility of reference, and for the quantity of matter in a short space, an appeal may be made to every un-

prejudiced and honest man, if the Compendious Dictionary be not the best and most practical up to the present time. When a few corrections are made, with additions now in preparation, I believe it will continue to be what it now is,—all that is required in a handbook of reference.

The Dictionaries prepared since 1848 are by Professor Etzmüller and Dr. Grein. The former, in his *Lexicon Anglo-Saxonicum* of 1851, has followed Dr. Bosworth's plan of noting the inflections, and of grouping whole classes of words together; but, as he has rejected the common alphabetical order, his book is of little practical utility. Then, as to the admirable and honest work of Dr. Grein, now in course of publication, though there are many new words introduced, and the genders are carefully given, the principal parts of the verb must be sought amidst the numerous authorities.

So much for Mr. Cockayne's depreciation of the Compendious Dictionary and his confusion of dates. How little reliance can be placed on the assertion that the Professor had not even read the Gospels may be known by another fact:—The *Moeso-Gothic* and *Anglo-Saxon Gospels* were most carefully transcribed for the press, and he had collated the latter, with the *Corpus MS.* at Cambridge, long before Mr. Thorpe's Gospels appeared in 1842. The *Gothic* and *Anglo-Saxon Gospels* are now in the Oxford University Press, with the addition of Wycliffe's

and Tyndale's versions, verse for verse, in parallel columns*.

These facts may show the impossibility of depending upon the assertions as to the preparation of Dr. Bosworth's Dictionaries,—the date when the Compendious Dictionary was published, and the knowledge of the Gospels.

Let us now take a general view of Mr. Cockayne's supposed discovery of errors. He appears to be unable to rise above the consideration of genders and conjugations. A glance at his pamphlet will show its prominent features :—Dr. Bosworth “has learnt “nothing about the gender or declension.” “On what “system did Dr. Bosworth mark his genders?” “The “perusal of so common a book as the Gospels was “not one of his methods.” The facts as to the Gospels have been already stated: the other will soon follow. My object is first to take a general view of Mr. Cockayne's pamphlet.

The laudation of self, and the depreciation of others, is the prevailing feature of what he has written. He calls Bopp and Pott, and their erudite countrymen, “an army of German fanatics;”

* This work is not only important to divines, but most interesting to philologists; as English may thus be easily traced from Tyndale's Version of 1526, up to Wycliffe's of 1389, to the Anglo-Saxon of 995, and the Gothic of 350. The printing has been long delayed, with the hope of removing some doubts by the photographic copy of Ulphilas, promised by Dr. F. A. Leo; but as it has not appeared, Uppström's facsimile of the Codex Argenteus has been adopted for the Gothic text.

and he says Dr. Bosworth “may do very well for a professor—“an enterprising professor;”—“but he has not done his duty.”—Mr. Cockayne applied privately to supersede the arrangement with the University to print the Anglo-Saxon Dictionary; but an honourable man could not be influenced: he therefore determined to “make his voice to be heard” by the whole University—to bring himself into notice by raising animated and angry discussions upon “Dr. Bosworth and his Saxon Dictionary.” I believe the University will smile at that attempt, as Dr. Bosworth does,—an attempt which shows Mr. Cockayne’s want both of judgment and critical power. First, as to judgment, in supposing that he could influence the University of Oxford; then, that he is able to criticise a book which he has never seen, and of which he knows nothing.

Let us now consider his power of criticism. In a very grave tone and manner, and in legal style, he draws up against the Professor an indictment of thirty-four counts. Eighteen of these relate to the genders of nouns, leaving sixteen counts. Then thirteen of these sixteen cannot be reckoned as counts, because they are *his thirteen charges against the Professor that he had not read books, and made extracts from them, years before they were published, and before some of them were in the press, or even in existence!* These thirteen counts, being nullified by the confusion of dates, must be taken from the sixteen; so there remain only three counts.

If we confine our attention to the Compendious Dictionary, the case is simply this:—From A to Lác there are 426 closely printed columns in small type. In using this Dictionary only since his own assumed date, 1855, that is nine years, he has not been able to find more than thirty-four of his supposed errors, of which thirteen cannot come into the calculation, as they refer to books not published in 1853, the errors are therefore reduced to twenty-one, and of these, eighteen relate to genders,—some of them his palpable blunders; there remain, then, only three errors in 426 closely printed columns. Now, I appeal to the most accurate scholar, and to every man who knows what literary work is, if they do not speak strongly in favour of Dr. Bosworth's general accuracy.

I know that Mr. Cockayne endeavours to give the impression that these thirty-four imagined errors were to be found in A and B; while the truth is, he has extended his search as far as Lác. This is evident from his curious criticism upon Dust, Ealoð, Funde, Gegyrela, Hord, and Lác. I have, therefore, properly made my calculation from A to Lác.

Before I proceed to particulars, it is necessary I should state this general fact, communicated to me by the Professor himself, that, in repeatedly going over his books, *he had, many years ago, corrected all the errors which Mr. Cockayne has noticed,* and others of greater importance. Some, that he calls errors, are not corrected, and for the best of all reasons, because they are not errors, though they

are gravely adduced as such by Mr. Cockayne. I must follow Mr. Cockayne into his stronghold—the array of genders omitted.

The first is, “Ge-gyrela, *a garment*, makes -an, and “is mentioned in Luke xv. 22. In Dr. Bosworth’s last “Dictionary it appears he only knows the word from “Somner, and has learnt nothing about its gender “or declension.” In the Compendious Dictionary it was desirable that as many words as possible should be so reduced in their explanation as only to occupy one line. For this purpose, where there could not be the least difficulty with the youngest learner, the genitive case and the gender were omitted. So it was with Ge-gyrela; for, as he had said under -a, “all nouns ending in -a are masculine and make the genitive in -an,” it seemed unnecessary to lose space by any addition, especially as in the preceding column to that in which Ge-gyrela is found, and a little above, the word is given thus, Ge-gerela, -gyrela, -an, *m; clothing, garment, robe*. In the Dictionary of 1838 the genitive case is given, and Luke xv. 22 is cited as the example. What can now be said of the weight of such a charge, or of knowing the word *only* from Somner!

So much for the omission of genders. One example only shall be cited of wrong genders. Mr. Cockayne concludes a long and irrelevant discussion on the gender of *lác* in this triumphant style:—“Now I ask Messrs. Thorpe and Bosworth how they “make out *lác* to be neuter?” I am sure Mr. Thorpe, the veteran Anglo-Saxon scholar, and Dr. Bosworth

must smile at the question. The Doctor has answered, because it is neuter in Cædmon, p. 177, 21, —onbleot þæt lác. In Mr. Thorpe's Psalms, 106, 21 : 115, 7 : we find *lāces*, which cannot, by any ingenuity, be contorted into a feminine form. It is neuter in the Gospels, and the Rushworth, which, though not pure Saxon, may be trusted on this point, when in Matt. viii. 4 it has þæt lác, and in Matt. v. 24, þin lác. It is well known that it is once or twice found as feminine, and I see a note was made from Mr. Thorpe's Homilies in 1846; but this exception could not be inserted into the Compendious Dictionary, as that part had been stereotyped long before. This is an example of the reckless manner in which Mr. Cockayne draws conclusions. Because one or two instances have been found where a feminine article precedes lác, he passes over the very numerous instances where lác is certainly neuter, and jumps to the conclusion that he has made a grand discovery. The same remark is equally applicable to the compounds, brýd-lác, and reáf-lác.

I will not cite more examples. I must however observe, that, at the foot of p. 6, he silently acknowledges his own injustice, by drawing his pen through "I can see no trace in Dr. Bosworth's "Compendious Dictionary, 1855, of his knowing "anything of this." He might well be ashamed of the assertion, as the word is clearly explained in the Dictionary. He makes a great fuss about his wonderful discovery that *funde* is the perfect

tense of *findan*. The Dictionary not only indicates this, but that *fond* is another form of the perfect.

I copy the two following examples from Dr. Bosworth's notes. Mr. Cockayne's inability to discover the new meaning of words will be evident from the two following examples. He affirms truly enough,—“*Brecan to bark*, I cannot find “in Dr. Bosworth.” For this simple reason, *brecan* never did, and never can mean *to bark*. *Beorcan to bark*, is quite a different word from *brecan to break*, and *brecende* signifies *breaking*; and, referring to winds, sudden *breaking*, *gushing*, or *crashing*; and so Mr. Thorpe very properly translates it:—

Swogaþ windas, winds shall howl,
blawaþ brecende. *crashing* blow.

Thorpe's Cod. Exon., p. 59. 10.

Beorcan to bark, and *brecan to break*, are in both the Dictionaries. Mistakes seem to creep into every one of Mr. Cockayne's paragraphs; here he translates the simple phrase, *horsa hnægung horses neighing*, or, *horses are neighing*, making *horsa* the nominative, while the merest tiro must know it is the genitive plural, and must be translated *neighing of horses*.

I give only one other instance of his mistaking the meaning of a word, and his inability to observe, even when he is most confident. I quote his own words:—“*Behealdan*. We all know the “modern English phrase, (I would willingly write

“frase,) ‘I am beholden to you.’ In Gibson’s edition
 “of the Chronicle, published 1692, long enough ago
 “one would think for Dr. Bosworth, who, perhaps,
 “has been able to devote something like seventy
 “years to his studies, to obtain and to read the
 “book, some trace of the word appears. Lye,
 “laborious, high-spirited (?), and full as he is, seems
 “to have missed the word in this sense. Surely,
 “if a new edition of a bad Dictionary is to appear
 “under the auspices of one of our noble Univer-
 “sities, it will be put into the hands of a man
 “who can observe.” This is plain speaking! Mr.
 Cockayne said before, “I have tried to *lend* to
 “the University the conviction I have long *enter-*
 “*tained* ;” and he now clearly shows what that
conviction is,—that the work ought to be in his
 own hands. Such is the *conviction* which *he*
entertains.

But he has rightly said,—“Surely..... it will be
 “put into the hands of a man who *can observe*.” Let
 us see in this instance how far Mr. Cockayne pos-
 sesses the faculty of observation in a higher degree
 than Dr. Bosworth. He cites the following words
 from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of the year 1006:—
 Æc hit naht ne beheold þe mǣ þe hit oþtor ær dyðe,
 that is, the English did all they could in opposing
 the Danes ; *but it signified (held, secured,) nothing*
more than it had often done before : or, in Mr.
 Thorpe’s terse Saxon English,—“*but it came to*
naught more than it had often done before ;” (p. 113.)
 The former translation is made from Dr. Bosworth’s

Dictionary, published in 1838 ; but this part was printed so early as 1834. The Doctor had therefore *observed*, and given the real meaning of this passage thirty years ago. This meaning of behealdan is in both the Dictionaries. Let us examine Mr. Cockayne's explanation : “ ‘I am beholden to you,’ that is, *bound in gratitude, obliged, or indebted to you.*” Let us see how these words will read in this passage:—“*But it was beholden, (obliged or indebted) nothing more than it had before.*” The absurdity is evident. He does not know the meaning of the expressive Anglo-Saxon word behealdan, nor of our English *beholden*. Had he consulted Dr. Worcester's Dictionary of the English Language, he would have obtained the meaning of *beholden* and the etymology of behealdan given by Dr. Bosworth, for Dr. Worcester* has taken all his Anglo-Saxon derivations from the Professor's Dictionary of 1838. Behealdan and behold are from *be by, near, and healdan to hold, observe, to hold near, to fix the eyes upon an object which is near.* In Anglo-Saxon, *to hold near from respect or regard, to mind, signify.* Thus, a person *beholds* that which is *brought near, and excites interest or admiration ; he sees involuntarily, looks attentively, and observes*

* Dr. Worcester sent from America one of the first and finest copies of his work to Dr. Bosworth, as the best acknowledgment he could make for supplying him with the most satisfactory etymology of English words derived from Anglo-Saxon. It is a large quarto volume, of nearly 1800 pages : a very handsome book, well printed, on good paper, and I think the price does not exceed 3cs.

and *views* carefully.—But a literal translation of this passage, with Mr. Cockayne's adopted Latin version, is given below, that every one may see the English is little more than a transliteration of the Anglo-Saxon, with which the Latin has no analogy.

Ac hit naht ne beheold þe mǣ þe hit oftor ær dyde.

But it naught signified the more than it often did (ere) before.

Or,—*But it signified no more than it had often done before.*

Verum id non magis profuit quam antea sepius.

Gibson did his best to give a correct Latin version, and Mr. Cockayne has translated Gibson's Latin, and not the Anglo-Saxon. On referring to the addenda of Lye's Dictionary, Dr. Bosworth tells me he finds he has unconsciously adopted the rendering of Manning, which is—*it signified no more than*; Mr. Cockayne's own authority is therefore against him, and supports the Professor's derivation and translation, made thirty years ago.

I have now touched upon every important point, excepting Mr. Cockayne's assertion that the proposed work is "a new edition of a *bad* dictionary." This is Mr. Cockayne's opinion; but it is in direct opposition to that of the literati and of the press, both of Europe and America. I will not make a parade by quoting the opinions here; but as many may not have observed them, a few are given in the last page of this pamphlet, that the true character and the reception of the original edition may be known, and Mr. Cockayne's friends, whom he has

influenced by strong assertions, may judge from the opinions of competent witnesses. I will only add, that I believe the new edition will contain all that is known up to the present time, as Dr. Bosworth has the promised assistance of most of the eminent Anglo-Saxon scholars at home and abroad.

In the preceding pages, I hope, I have avoided the personalities which I condemn in Mr. Cockayne, while I have been recording the facts, which I felt it was necessary should be plainly stated.

I have, I believe, succeeded in showing that Mr. Cockayne is—

Wrong in his dates; and therefore
Wrong in the conclusions he draws from those
dates;

Wrong as to his statement of errors;
Wrong as to the knowledge of the Gospels;
Wrong as to the omission of genders;

Wrong in the genders of nouns;
Wrong in the meaning of *brecan* and *brecende*;
Wrong in the meaning of the English *beholden*,
and its application;

Wrong in the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon
behealdan; and

Wrong in his supposed influence with the Uni-
versity of Oxford;

and that, therefore, his judgment on a literary work is as worthless, as his attempt to interfere with an existing arrangement is unjustifiable.

A DICTIONARY of the ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE, containing the Accentuation, the Grammatical Inflections, &c. By the Rev. J. BOSWORTH, D.D., of Trinity College, Cambridge: Dr. Phil. of Leyden: F.R.S. One vol. 8vo. London, 1838.

"This volume contains, within a moderate compass, a complete apparatus for the study of Anglo-Saxon. Copious, accurate, cheap—embodying the whole results of Anglo-Saxon scholarship—there is no other work of the kind that can be put in comparison with it. . . . It is the fruit of ripe scholarship, enlarged views, and many years' severe and patient labour. . . . The English language consists of about thirty-eight thousand words. Of these, about twenty-three thousand, or nearly five-eighths, are of Anglo-Saxon origin."—*Edinburgh Review* for Oct. 1839, No. CXLI. pp. 221-244.

"The substance of the English language, its vigorous root, its firm and massy stem, with its wide-spreading branches, are all Anglo-Saxon. Though its foliage has been varied and adorned by scions of Grecian, Roman, and Norman origin, our present English is 'completely Anglo-Saxon, in its whole idiom and construction.' The work now before us, for the first time, lays fully open the source of our copious and powerful language. It is denominated an Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, but it is, in fact, a Lexicon of early English; for the celebrated Ælfric, one of the first and purest Anglo-Saxon writers, so styles his native tongue. . . . If it be our reproach that our most eminent literary men have been so much occupied in studying Latin and Greek, that they have scarcely deigned to cast a glance at their own mother tongue, much less to examine the beauty of its structure, or its nervous power, the reproach is now removed; for here we have a work, which, while it contains the derivation and original meaning of all pure Anglo-Saxon words, proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the bones and sinews, the real strength and vigour of our good old English, is, like our being, our customs, and our free constitution, entirely derived from our hardy and independent Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

"This work is a necessary supplement to all our present English dictionaries, and ought to be in the hands of every one who has any pretensions to a thorough knowledge of the English language. . . . All who wish to know the real signification of the words they daily use, will here find a ready access to their original meaning."—*Literary Gazette*.

"The publication of this Dictionary is likely to form an era in the study of Anglo-Saxon. A book which we venture to say will do more to advance the study of the Anglo-Saxon language, and consequently the full and perfect understanding of our own, than any work which has yet appeared. A most laborious task—a volume, upon which we lay our hands with great respect. The long Preface gives a sketch of all the Teutonic and Scandinavian languages, with abundant illustrations. It is full of very valuable learning, and shows great diligence, and patient, long research."—*North American Review*, No. C., July, 1838.

"Dr. Bosworth has long since made proof of thorough competence for his present task. . . . He has thoroughly investigated the wide field of philological instruction which has of late years been so skillfully broken up by continental scholars, and especially by those of Germany; and he has not been induced, by these higher and more extensive inquiries, to overlook those minor circumstances of illustration and arrangement which contribute so much to the usefulness of grammatical and lexicographical composition. The prolegomenary matter is highly valuable, and must have cost great pains before it could be reduced to its actual state of close yet clear compression. The filiation of languages is exemplified in various forms of agreement and transition, and copious references are given to works of authority, where a more complete exposition seemed desirable. All this is skillfully conducted, and with entire mastery of the subject. A work which supersedes all others of the kind, and which is not likely to be speedily superseded."—*Eclectic Review*.

"Dr. Bosworth's qualifications for the work were attained by the study of twenty years, seven of which have been occupied on the book before us. In speaking of the Preface, it would be impossible to find so much information on the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic tongues collected in so few pages. . . . We cannot but express the delight which we have felt in the candour and sincerity with which his work has been conducted, and we rejoice to perceive that the petty prejudices and supercilious spirit which have disgraced so many of his brother Saxonists of the present day, have not infected him. We hope that his contemporaries may see the error of their ways from the simplicity and candour of Dr. Bosworth."—*New York Review*.

"Dr. Bosworth has been long known to the public as an indefatigable and accurate scholar, and this Dictionary fully answers our expectation. We have no hesitation in saying it is one of the most important works which has issued from the press, and that the manner in which a very difficult task has been executed, corresponds with its importance."—*British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review*.

"This work gives full proof of the learned writer's philosophic mind, his fundamental knowledge of language, and his extensive reading of the best philological works, not only of England, but of other countries, especially of Germany and our *Fatherland*. Great value attaches to it from the writer having carefully added to the Anglo-Saxon the cognate words from other branches of the German stem."—*Translated from Professor Siegenbeek's Review in the Haarlem Literary and Scientific Journal*.

"We are glad to see that, at last, the great difficulty which lay in the way of a more general study of the Anglo-Saxon language is cleared up by the appearance of a portable and useful Dictionary. At a very moderate price, and in a most convenient form, it contains all that is requisite in former Dictionaries, and nearly twice as many words. We recommend it strongly."—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

